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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
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HUMAN RIGHTS REVIEW  
(15-28 September 1978)

SOVIET UNION

--Ilya Orlov, an official of the registered Baptist church, told a US Embassy official on 27 September that if the group of Pentecostals left the embassy--where they have vowed to stay until they are allowed to emigrate--"nothing would happen to them" because "they had not committed a political offense." He added that "if they leave the embassy, they eventually will receive exit permission." Orlov observed that Soviet authorities would never permit the Pentecostals to leave the country "from the embassy."

Orlov's statement was probably delivered with official sanction. Representatives of the officially recognized Baptist church serve at the pleasure of the regime and frequently serve as spokesmen for official policy toward religious groups. Orlov requested the meeting with the embassy officer and indicated that he intended the message to be relayed to the appropriate officials at the embassy.

This backdoor communication provides little guarantee that the Pentecostals would in fact be allowed to emigrate if they left the embassy. The release from a forced labor camp of the younger Vashchenko, son of one of the leaders of the embassy sit-in, would constitute a more forceful signal of any desire on the part of the authorities to resolve the case of the Pentecostal "squatters" amicably.

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LATIN AMERICA

--Chile: In his speech marking the fifth anniversary of the overthrow of the Allende government on 11 September, President Pinochet outlined the latest and, as yet, most definite plans for the transition from military to civilian government. According to Pinochet, a new constitution, prepared under his guidance, would be submitted to voters next year, but elections would not be held until 1985. Initial reaction to the speech has focused on the long interval before civilian rule. Probably of greater significance, however, is the developing controversy over the Pinochet constitution, which differs markedly from Chile's 1925 constitution. Pinochet intends to submit the new constitution for approval in a national plebiscite, some possible outcomes of which could produce serious, even critical problems for the regime. Whether Chileans accept or reject the new charter, the Pinochet constitution and the opposition to it disclose once again the political consequences of the regime's perception of the profound cleavage in Chilean politics.

In his lengthy speech, often polemical in tone, Pinochet dealt with more than the transition to civilian rule. As he has in the past, he defended the legitimacy of the coup and the moral mandate of his military regime, reviewed its progress, highly praised its economic performance, and covered a wide range of domestic and international issues. He met head-on many of the past and present criticisms of his administration and its policies and boldly raised some thorny matters, most notably the Letelier case. All in all, it was a long and strongly worded defense of his embattled regime in its continuing struggle against the forces and ideologies allegedly manifested in the

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overthrown Allende administration. In that struggle, Pinochet claims to enjoy majority support against his opponents. His claim will be put to an important test when Chilean voters are given the chance to accept or reject the regime's constitution--a controversial document, one of whose major purposes is to prevent legally another Allende-type government.

So far, there are no signs the regime sees any great risk in permitting the plebiscite. It apparently believes it enjoys high civilian support, a perception perhaps colored by the success of its plebiscite victory last January. Then, 75 percent voted against the UN resolution condemning the human rights situation in Chile. Though the choice was forced upon the voters, the election seems to have been totally honest. It was also a great and unexpected victory for Pinochet, who spoke of the vote as "legitimizing" his regime. Pinochet's position in the forthcoming constitutional plebiscite will not be assisted by the nationalistic bias of the earlier vote, however, and a negative outcome is possible.

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--Argentina-US: Argentina has indefinitely postponed formal ratification of the Tlateloco Treaty, which seeks to ban nuclear weapons from Latin America. There is a possibility that it will reverse its earlier decision and decide not to adhere to the accord. The change of mind stems in part from growing hostility in Buenos Aires to US pressure on human rights. It also reflects the fact that Argentina has not received any assurances it will get heavy water technology from the US. Contrary to the US position, the Argentines insist that the US offered them heavy water technology last November in exchange for their ratification of full-scope safeguards. President Videla went against the advice of many of his advisers when he signed the treaty earlier this year. He has been under strong pressure to withdraw his support by those who believe that delay or refusal is the only way to stand up to the US.

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--Ecuador: A plot by some senior Ecuadorean military officers and election officials to announce widespread voting irregularities and fraud as a prelude to voiding the country's two-stage presidential election apparently has been shelved temporarily. The postponement seems to have been prompted by broad exposure in the media and by denunciations from civilian political leaders. It remains uncertain whether the conspiracy can succeed, but US Embassy officials in Quito believe that the plotters probably will try again after the public furor subsides.

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ASIA

--South Korea: The opening of the National Assembly this month provides a forum for the opposition to attack the government during the campaign preceding the legislative election this December. Dissidents outside the assembly view the preelection period as their last chance to push for fundamental change in government. They fear that a strong ruling party victory, combined with President Pak's inauguration for another six-year term on 27 December, will be read as final public approval of the political changes introduced in 1972. They hope to heighten political tensions with stepped-up demonstrations by university students.

The dissidents want to force the government to choose between the public embarrassment of street protests or the reimposition of strict controls on political activism. If Pak clamps down on dissent, it would mark the end of the more relaxed attitude the government has adopted in dealing with protesters and a reversal of some of the recent progress made on the South Korean human rights front. [REDACTED]

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--Philippines: President Marcos' 21 September speech on the sixth anniversary of martial law was low-key and most notable for what it did not address. He made no mention of human rights issues, nor did he indicate an early end to martial law, noting only that a "parliamentary tradition" must be established in the Philippines to "ease the country into full political normalization." Marcos' references to local elections that will soon be held in the Muslim areas of the southern Philippines seemed intended to dampen speculation over recent reports of an upsurge in fighting in the region. Marcos is probably concerned over possible repercussions on the human rights front if the international media focus on the use of US military equipment by the Philippine military units fighting the Muslim insurgents. [REDACTED]

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AFRICA

--South Africa: The impending demolition of Crossroads, the black squatter town of 20,000 people on the outskirts of Cape Town, illustrates the determination of the South African Government to force the families of black workers out of the western part of Cape Province. At its annual congress late last month, the Cape branch of the ruling National Party reaffirmed both its hardline policy toward blacks and its determination to preserve the Cape as a permanent home solely for whites and Coloreds, the 2.5 million South Africans of mixed blood who are concentrated there.

In 1955, the government drew a north-south boundary, the Eiselen Line, through Cape Province and set off the western third of the country as an area in which Coloreds have employment and housing privileges not given to blacks--although far fewer than those accorded to whites. The government decided at that time that it would gradually remove all black laborers from western Cape Province and relocate them in nearby black homelands. Ten years later the government proclaimed a 5-percent annual reduction in the number of blacks allowed to work in the area and put a moratorium on the construction of new housing for black families.

The government did not, however, foresee the industrial boom and economic expansion of the late 1960s, which made black labor more essential than ever. Since the Eiselen Line was drawn, the number of blacks legally in the area has doubled to about 360,000, and there may be an equal number there illegally. Despite this increase, the ban on legal family housing remained in force. Squatter towns mushroomed, and the government is now systematically eliminating them and ousting dependents--in part to forestall disorders such as those spearheaded in the past two years by young blacks living in the townships.

Despite some muttering from Afrikaner intellectuals about the need for a better deal for blacks, the provincial party congress last month voted unanimously to tighten controls on the influx of blacks and make black labor more expensive for the employer. The congress ruled out any prospect that urban blacks west of the Eiselen Line might be allowed to hold property leases, an innovation introduced elsewhere in the country in an effort to stabilize some of the urban population.

The hardline tone of the congress was set by Minister of Defense P. W. Botha, the Cape Province party leader who has just been named to succeed Prime Minister Vorster. Minister of Plural Relations and Development Connie Mulder, one of Botha's political rivals, jumped on the bandwagon and took a strong stand against a black labor force with permanent residence rights in the province. Mulder, whose department controls nearly every aspect of black life in South Africa, promised to remove Crossroads, the last of the Cape's major black squatter communities, despite protests from many Cape Town whites.

The congress also completely ruled out the possibility of political rights for blacks. The government, however, is still considering proposals to give a limited political franchise to Coloreds. Afrikaners in the Cape obviously believe they can coexist with the Colored community, which observes white mores while remaining subservient to white domination.

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The Eiselen Line is one of the boundaries that is often cited in speculation about the possibility of a federated system--or even of partition in the long-term South African future. The Cape National Party has shown, by its determination to remove as many blacks as possible, that it intends to continue to mold the area west of the line into a white homeland that could remain intact whatever the future holds for South Africa. [REDACTED]

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--South Africa: Fourteen friends and relatives of Steve Biko were arrested earlier this month. According to the South African press, the government ordered the arrests in anticipation of disturbances on 12 September--the first anniversary of Biko's death. None occurred.

Biko's brother, Khaya, was detained overnight, but was released the following day because of illness. The rest, however, are still being detained without charge under the internal security act.

Close associates of the Biko family believe that at least some of those arrested will soon be released and that the government intended the arrests to serve as a warning that the activities of Biko's family and friends were still being monitored. [REDACTED]

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--Uganda: President Idi Amin, true to his promise, has established a human rights committee. According to the official announcement, the committee is to ensure there is no breach of human rights in Uganda; if there is, the culprits are to be "put on trial without distinction." The committee is to be chaired by the Minister of Justice and includes the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Army Chief of Staff, and a former Ugandan UN Ambassador.

The establishment of the committee is an effort by Amin to improve his regime's badly tarnished image and gain some international acceptance. Third country ambassadors and other observers have reported that there has been a general absence of unrest and repression in Uganda over the past year.

At the committee's inauguration ceremony, however, the erratic Amin--possibly by design--left open the chance he may again find it necessary to revert to heavyhanded suppression. He said that there were armed Ugandan exiles planning to invade Uganda--a situation Amin has used in the past to justify some of his repressive actions.

Amin's power does not appear to be seriously threatened at the moment. Even if he were removed, the internal situation in Uganda would probably not change very much, given the country's basic tribal and religious divisions. [REDACTED]

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